

# The Apprentice

Newsletter

March 2009



## Welcome...

to issue six of 'The Apprentice' newsletter, which keeps you up-to-date with the latest news and success stories from Swansea College's Modern

### Apprenticeship programme.

The college's Work Based Learning [WBL] area provides a comprehensive training and placement service for employers and learners. The programmes integrate work based

training with further education and personal development.

**We hope you find this newsletter informative. If you would like any further information on Swansea College's WBL programmes please contact 01792 284000.**

## Student Achievement... Kyle James

After leaving school Kyle wandered from job to job but wasn't really sure what he wanted to do as a career.

When Kyle became unemployed he joined the New Deal programme with the aim of returning to work as soon as possible and it was whilst on New Deal that he attended a presentation from Swansea College's Work Based Learning department about their Apprenticeship programme. Kyle had always had an interest in engineering and decided that electronics would be a course he would enjoy so he applied to the Apprenticeship programme and was successful in getting a placement as a technician within the electronics team.

Kyle spent two years working as an electronics technician and completed his Level 2 qualifications in record time. It soon became apparent that Kyle was a natural in the electronics field and after completing his Level 2 course he was put forward for a job with Elite Aerials, a local digital aerial and satellites company. He was successful at interview and has worked for the company for the past year.

A typical day for Kyle starts at 8am when he arrives at the office and is given a list of jobs for the day. He and a colleague travel all over the country together - from Fishguard to Plymouth - where they average between five and ten jobs a day. Their main work involves installing aerials, satellites and digital systems.

"I love working for Elite Aerials as it has enabled me to put into practice all that I learned whilst doing my course," says Kyle. "Every day is different and I learn new skills all the time."

Elite Aerials has been a supportive company, putting Kyle forward for additional training courses to ensure he has a high level of Health and Safety knowledge.

Kyle is currently working full time for Elite Aerials and is doing well in his Level 3 electronics qualifications. His future goals are to own his own business and achieve a Level 5 qualification in electronics.

Kyle is just 21 years old and has proved that with determination you can achieve anything.

"The Apprenticeship programme changed my life around," he adds. "It has given me a career and a future and it has also given me the opportunity to pass my driving test and buy a car."



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Employer profile -

# The Dragon Hotel

Swansea College has worked with The Dragon Hotel for several years to provide its employees with nationally recognised qualifications. The Dragon Hotel has also given learners the opportunity to gain qualifications through Apprenticeship programmes and work experience.

The Skill Build programme is the most recent college initiative delivered in partnership with The Dragon Hotel. Skill Build places students in work experience tasters for 13 weeks with a view to progressing them into further training or employment. There are currently two Skill Build trainees [Keri Cox and Keri Clarke] on placement at The Dragon Hotel undertaking house keeping duties.

As part of their house keeping duties the trainees ensure that every room of the hotel is cleaned and tidied to a high standard. They also deal with guest requests so they can develop customer care skills. The trainees must be professional in their presentation skills while constantly adhering to Health and Safety regulations. The placement in The Dragon Hotel offers a wide range of experience and encourages the trainees to learn how to multi-task successfully.

The Skill Build trainees receive a lot of support from Heather Page, the house keeping manager.

“We treat the trainees the same way as we treat our staff by offering them Fire and Health and Safety training and giving them realistic experience and targets,” adds Rhea. “We monitor their capability and progression to ensure they are suited to the job role and we offer help whenever it is required.”

Following the Skill Build placement both trainees have been offered employment by The Dragon Hotel. As well as being employed they will be able to continue training as the hotel provides opportunities for their staff in a variety of areas including cleaning, house keeping, customer care, catering and bar/hospitality.



Keri Cox and Heather Page

“We believe in giving people chances and we all benefit from the Skill Build training scheme,” says Heather.

The Dragon Hotel recently won an award for Best Large Hotel in Wales 2008 and Swansea College looks forward to continuing its training link with the Dragon Hotel team.

## Help after redundancy

In response to the current economic climate, where many jobs have been threatened and the number of redundancies has increased, the Government has created a scheme called ReAct.

To be eligible to receive support from ReAct:

- You have become unemployed within the last six months as a result of redundancy or you are currently unemployed and have not been in continuous employment for six weeks or more since being made redundant.
- You are currently under notice of redundancy.
- You have not undertaken any publicly funded training since being made redundant.

If you are signed up to the Apprenticeship scheme when you are made redundant you will need to sign off from the scheme before you can access the ReAct funding. Advisors will be able to discuss this with you in more detail.

**For more information on the ReAct scheme contact Careers Wales on 0800 100 900 or ReAct on 01792 765888.**



Welcome to the world of an...

# Electrical Installation Apprentice

**Phil Hughes, 22, works as an electrical apprentice for a company called Down to Earth.** The company specialises in domestic and commercial installation in the Swansea area.

During an average working week Phil works on a variety of electrical jobs including installation of distribution boards, light fittings, socket outlets, outside lights and security alarms. Phil has also worked on a number of full house rewires where he has participated in 1st and 2nd fix.

One of Phil's recent jobs was on a new build, £1million four-storey property located in the Mumbles area. The building had a solar panel heating system which Phil helped to install, as well as a data hub system to control all lights, a music system, heating, alarms and ventilation through a touch screen system.

Each room had to be given special consideration for electrical installations. The kitchen was designed specifically for the property and the home gym and steam room located on the ground floor was particularly challenging.

"This was a very interesting job and the work required of me was very challenging however I really enjoyed it and was able to put a lot of the knowledge learned from college into the job," says Phil.

Down to Earth has enabled Phil to get a wide experience of electrical installation work.

"I enjoy college but prefer the practical side of the course," adds Phil. "I enjoy being onsite and doing 'hands on' work so an apprenticeship is far better suited to me than a full time course."

Every day brings a new challenge for Phil and he also gets to travel instead of being based permanently in one place.

Phil works alongside his boss Phil Jones and electrician Dale Evans [a former apprentice of Swansea College] and together they make a good team.



Dale Evans and Phil Hughes

"We all get on well with each other and that makes a good working environment for us," says Phil. "Because of this, the company has a good name and we get a lot of interesting jobs. Phil Jones is really supportive and is a great role model. It's mainly because of him that I've turned myself around in college as I don't want to let him down. I'm more determined as I now realise how important my qualifications are."

Phil is close to finishing his Foundation Apprenticeship and is on target to pass his exams when, if successful, he will enrol on the Advanced Apprenticeship [Level 3] in September 2009. On the Advanced Apprenticeship Phil will be involved with higher responsibility jobs like testing and fault finding and he will also be able to do more jobs with less supervision.

Phil is due to complete his Advanced Apprenticeship in 2011 and he will then be a fully qualified electrician. His future plans are to use his electrical qualifications abroad, experience living in another country and be his own boss.